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PRESS RELEASE

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Maryland Woman Sentenced to 27 Months in Prison In Theft of More Than \$450,000 From Employer - Clerk Created Files For Fake Real Estate Transactions -

WASHINGTON - Anika Williams, 35, of Bowie, Md., was sentenced today to 27 months in prison on a federal charge stemming from the theft of more than \$450,000 from her employer, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Williams pled guilty in May 2011 to a charge of interstate transportation of stolen money. She was sentenced by the Honorable Reggie B. Walton in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Williams is required to pay \$455,548 in restitution to her former employer. Upon completion of her prison term, she will be placed on three years of supervised release.

At the plea hearing, Williams admitted that, between July 2005 and February 2008, she stole \$455,548 from her employer, the now-defunct Paramount Title and Escrow Company. As the office manager of Paramount's office in the District of Columbia, Williams was responsible for handling matters before and after a real estate settlement occurred, and in particular, disbursing funds and recording documents and land records.

Williams used her position to defraud Paramount by creating "dummy" files for fake real estate transactions that appeared to be legitimate on the balance reports in Paramount's computer system. She transferred funds intended for use in legitimate real estate transactions to dummy real estate transactions. She then was able to steal money from both the dummy real estate transactions and legitimate real estate transactions by creating checks and initiating wire transactions that appeared to be legitimate on the balance reports -- but which were, in fact, unauthorized and fraudulent.

During the course of her scheme, Williams distributed the stolen funds, by checks and wire transactions, to herself; two companies that she formed, which actually performed some legitimate services for Paramount; her brother, who also worked for Paramount; her boyfriend, who worked for one of her companies, and a friend and former co-worker at Paramount.

The other three individuals have pled guilty to charges of receipt of stolen property. As part of their pleas, they are to pay a combined total of \$128,000 in restitution. They are to be sentenced next month.

This case was investigated by the Washington Field Office of the U.S. Secret Service and the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD).

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the efforts of the Special Agent who worked on the case for the U.S. Secret Service and MPD Detective Richard Espinosa. He also commended the efforts of those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, including Legal Assistant Latoya Wade, student Devron Elliott, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Frederick Yette, who handled the prosecution.

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